



## Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration  
P.O. Box 61409  
Vancouver, WA 98666-1409

TRANSMISSION BUSINESS LINE

March 22, 2002

In reply refer to: Grand Coulee-Bell (TNP-TPP-3)

**To: People Interested in the Grand Coulee-Bell 500-kV Transmission Line Project  
(Eastern Washington Reinforcement)**

In January 2002, Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) wrote to tell you about a proposed transmission line that could affect you. We asked for your comments on the project and held three public meetings in eastern Washington. Response was good; we had over 200 comments. Thank you for taking the time to tell us your ideas.

After reviewing your comments, we have added an alternative to consider in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. At this point, the alternatives we are considering for the project involve alternative structure designs. We will continue to study the originally proposed 500-kilovolt (kV) transmission line, which would use single-circuit structures from Grand Coulee for most of the 75 miles east and then would use double-circuit structures for the remaining nine miles to Bell Substation in Spokane. In addition to this alternative, we have added an alternative to consider using single-circuit structures for most of the last nine miles to Bell substation also. For the single-circuit alternative, the new 500-kV single-circuit structures would be approximately the same height as the existing 230-kV double-circuit structures. We also will consider the alternative of not building a line.

This letter briefly summarizes the public comments, outlines our next steps, and tells where to call if you have questions.

### **Proposal**

BPA still proposes to construct a new 500-kV transmission line in eastern Washington. The project is needed to improve reliability and to support current and future demand for electricity in Washington State and the Pacific Northwest.

The proposed 500-kV transmission line would connect from BPA's existing Bell Substation in Spokane to the Bureau of Reclamation's existing Grand Coulee Switchyard at Grand Coulee Dam. The new line would be located primarily on BPA's existing right-of way. The project also would involve expanding Bell Substation on BPA property and developing Grand Coulee Switchyard within the fenced area.

The transmission line corridor between the Grand Coulee and Bell substations currently contains two 115-kV wood poles and three 230-kV steel lattice transmission lines. Two of the 230-kV lines are double circuited on one set of steel towers. Together, these transmission lines can no longer efficiently move power from generation sources east of Spokane to areas west of Spokane. Replacing one of the 115-kV lines with a 500-kV line will relieve congestion, provide for future growth, and enhance service reliability to the community.

## Public Comments

In January and February, BPA received public comments on the proposed transmission line. Many of these comments were from public meetings. Public scoping meetings were held in Grand Coulee, Davenport, and Spokane. We also received comments in briefings with key stakeholders, by telephone, mail, and e-mail.

The comments focused on:

- Potential impacts to farming practices (erosion, noxious weeds, distance between structures, crop damage, and construction schedule)
- Double-circuit vs. single-circuit structures (removing both 115-kV wood pole structures and replacing them with one steel structure; using single-circuit for the entire transmission line route)
- Land use (crossing Riverside State Park, Whitworth College, and residential areas)

Other impact comments were on noise, public health and safety, and visual. We also received questions on why we need to build the line and about Avista's plans to expand its transmission system.

This is just a summary of the comments that we received. All of the comments will be posted on our web site at [www.efw.bpa.gov](http://www.efw.bpa.gov). Please look for the Grand Coulee-Bell project under environmental planning/analysis, Active Projects.

## Next Steps

You will see crews working along the line through the following months. These people are conducting on-the-ground environmental surveys and staking possible tower locations. In addition, to address noxious weed concerns, we will conduct a weed survey along the right-of-way and will follow weed control measures when working in the field. If we need to access property along the proposed route but off of our existing right-of-way, we will contact property owners for permission.

We are analyzing the possible environmental impacts of the project. Your comments are helping us know where to focus our efforts. The information that we gather will be published in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement that will be available for review and comment this summer.

Once we have completed the environmental review, BPA will decide whether and how to proceed with the project. If BPA decides to proceed, construction would likely begin in 2003.

## For More Information

If you have any questions about this proposal, please call me toll-free at 1-800-282-3713, at my direct number 1-360-619-6326, or send an e-mail to [makorsness@bpa.gov](mailto:makorsness@bpa.gov).

Thank you for your interest in our work.

Sincerely,

/s/ Inez Graetzer for 3-22-2002

Mark Korsness  
Project Manager